

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 241

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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COPENHAGEN 0049

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, DA

SUBJECT: GENERAL ELECTION - NO. 9 - ELECTION RESULT FORECAST

REF: COPENHAGEN 0041

SUMMARY. RECENT PUBLIC OPINION POLLS PREDICT THAT THE GOVERNING LIBERALS WILL BE THE BIG WINNERS IN THE JAN 9 DANISH ELECTION PRIMARILY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE OTHER CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES, INCLUDING GLISTRUP'S PROGRESSIVES. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WILL, HOWEVER, REMAIN THE LARGEST PARTY AND REGISTER A SLIGHT GAIN. THE FAR LEFT WILL EXCEED THE TEN PERCENT OF
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POPULAR SUPPORT IT HAS TRADITIONALLY RECEIVED. THE MOST

LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION IS
POUL HARTLING'S CONTINUATION AS PRIME MINISTER. WHETHER
THE GOVERNMENT REMAINS A MINORITY LIBERAL GOVERNMENT,
HOWEVER, WILL DEPEND ON THE EXACT COMPOSITION OF THE 179-SEAT
PARLIAMENT. THE STRENGTHENING OF THE SOCIALIST PARTIES MAY
WELL MEAN, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE LIBERALS WILL HAVE TO
COMPROMISE TO ENSURE AN ALLIANCE WITH WHAT REMAINS OF THE
RADICALS AND/OR OTHER PARTIES OF THE CENTER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MOST RECENT NATION-WIDE POLLS PUBLISHED JAN 6 AND 7
SHOW THE GOVERNING LIBERALS DOUBLING THEIR PARLIAMENTARY
REPRESENTATION FROM 22 TO ABOUT 44 OF THE CHAMBER'S 179 TOTAL.
SOME GAINS WERE ALSO REGISTERED BY THE FAR LEFT (COMMUNIST
AND SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY). THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS REMAIN
DENMARK'S LARGEST PARTY WITH ABOUT 50 SEATS, ONLY A MODEST
GAIN OVER THE 46 PREVIOUSLY HELD. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE
CHRISTIAN PEOPLES PARTY (WHICH WILL PROBABLY GET ABOUT EIGHT
SEATS) ALL OTHER PARTIES PRESENTLY REPRESENTED IN THE
FOLKETING (PARLIAMENT) WILL LOSE GROUND.

2. THE COMMUNISTS AND THE SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY TOGETHER
NOW APPARENTLY COMMAND ABOUT 12 PERCENT OF THE DANISH
ELECTORATE (SUFFICIENT TO OBTAIN ABOUT 20 SEATS) AGAINST
THE NINE-PLUS PERCENT THEY HAD IN THE LAST ELECTION.
THE LEFT SOCIALISTS APPEAR AGAIN TO HAVE LESS THAN THE
TWO PERCENT REQUIRED TO OBTAIN PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION.

3. ONE OF THE LIBERALS' ELECTION SLOGANS HAS BEEN "RALLY
AROUND THE LIBERALS" AND ACCORDING TO THE POLLS MANY OF THE
VOTERS WILL, AT THE EXPENSE OF THE NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES.
THE RADICAL, CONSERVATIVE, JUSTICE, CENTER DEMOCRAT, AND
MOGENS GLISTRUP'S PROGRESS PARTY ALL SHOW SUBSTANTIAL
LOSSES, ALTHOUGH ALL SHOULD RETAIN THE MINIMUM PARLIAMENTARY
REPRESENTATION OF FOUR SEATS WITH ONLY THE JUSTICE PARTY AND
THE CENTER DEMOCRATS IN THE DANGER ZONE.

4. DURING 1974 THE SUCCESS OF HARTLING'S LIBERAL-CENTER BLOC
IN PARLIAMENT (WITHOUT HILMAR BAUNSGAARD'S RADICALS) DEPENDED
LARGELY ON A "NEGATIVE MAJORITY", A CONCEPT WHICH ASSUMED
THAT THE MARXIST PARTIES ON THE LEFT, INCLUDING THE SOCIAL
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DEMOCRATS, AND GLISTRUP'S PROGRESS PARTY ON THE RIGHT
WOULD NOT COMBINE TO DEFEAT THE LIBERALS AND THEIR ALLIES.
THE PARLIAMENTARY IMPOTENCY OF THE RADICALS DURING THE YEAR
WAS A REFLECTION OF THEIR IRRELEVANCY TO THIS EQUATION.

5. THE RECENT POLLS CONFIRMED EXPECTED RADICAL LOSSES WITH
ONE SHOWING THEIR PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION ALMOST
HALVED (FROM 20 TO 12 SEATS). PARADOXICALLY, HOWEVER, THE

RADICALS MAY PLAY A LARGER OLE IN THE NEXT PARLIAMENT.
BECAUSE OF THE EXPECTED GAINS BY THE SOCIALIST PARTIES, HARTLING
MAY NEED THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE RADICALS IF HE IS TO LEAD THE
NEW CENTER GLOC AND IF HE CONTINUES TO ESCHEW COOPERATION WITH
GLISTRUP. THIS SUPPORT WILL BE NEEDED FOR HARTLING TO CARRY
THE DAY WHEN THE THREE MARXIST PARTIES COMBINE ON
A VOTE AGAINST A CENTRIST PRIME MINISTER.

6. GLISTRUP'S PROGRESSIVES APPEAR TO BE ON A DOWNWARD SLIDE
WITH THE LATEST POLL GIVING THEM ONLY 16 OF THE 28 MANDATES
THEY PRESENTLY HOLD AND SHOWING THEIR POPULAR SUPPORT REDUCED
TO NINE PERCENT FROM THE 16 PERCENT OBTAINED IN THE DEC 1973
ELECTION. THERE MAY BE FURTHER DETERIORATION BEFORE ELECTION
DAY. (HARTLING, FOR EXAMPLE, STOLE MUCH OF GLISTRUP'S TAX-CUT
APPEAL BY PUSHING THROUGH LAST SEPT A BUDGET BILL WHICH LOWERED
TAXES AS OF JAN 1 BY MORE THAN THE EQUIVALENT OF \$1 BILLION.)

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7. THE SHAPE OF THE POST-ELECTION GOVERNMENT MAY CONSEQUENTLY MAY WELL DEPEND ON NARROW DIFFERENCES IN THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT. THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT HARTLING WOULD PREFER TO CONTINUE AT THE HEAD OF HIS SINGLE-PARTY GOVERNMENT, DEPENDENT UPON LIBERAL-CENTER SUPPORT. THE RADICALS, HOWEVER, ARE AWARE OF THEIR PROBABLE NEW POWER POSITION AND WILL EXTRACT A PRICE FROM HARTLING FOR THEIR SUPPORT. IF HARTLING IS UNABLE TO PUT TOGETHER A WORKABLE LIBERAL-CENTER GOVERNMENT, THE WAY MAY BE OPEN FOR A MAJORITY COALITION GOVERNMENT TO INCLUDE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. CONCEIVABLY, FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND RADICAL LEADER HILMAR BAUNSGAARD COULD EMERGE AS A COMPROMISE PRIME
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MINISTER AND HIS REDUCED PARTY PROVIDING THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE LIBERS IN A COALITION GOVT WHICH WOULD BE BASED ON A SOLID (ABOUT 110SEATS) PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. SUCH A COALITION, HOWEVER, WOULD BE UNWIEDLY TO OPERATE AND PROBABLY ONLY TEMPORARY; MORE PERTINENT, IT IS NOT THE FIRST CHOICE OF EITHER THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS OR THE LIBERALS.

8. THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS HAVE REPEATEDLY RULED OUT A COALITION OR ANY PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS. FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THEREFORE, A PURE SOCIALIST-COALITION GOVERNMENT(TO INCLUDE THE COMMUNISTS AND THE SOCIALISTS PEOPLES PARTY) IS NOT IN THE CARDS. A MINORITY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT- OR ONE IN COALITION ONLY WITH THE SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY- IS PLAUSIBLE BUT ALMOST CERTAINLY COULD NOT OBTAIN A SUPPORTING PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IN THE FACE OF LIBERAL, CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN PEOPLES AND PROGRESS PARTY OPPOSITION.

9. A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC-LIBERAL COALITION (OF ABOUT 100 SEATS) WOULD MAKE GOOD SENSE THEORETICALLY AS A STRONG VEHICLE TO DEAL WITH DENMARK'S ECONOMIC WOES. THE PRACTICAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF ACHIEVING SUCH A COALITION, HOWEVER, APPEAR TO BE INSURMOUNTABLE. THE ELECTION, AFTER ALL, HAS PRIMARILY BEEN A FIGHT BETWEEN RPT BETWEEN THESE TWO PARTIES. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, AS THE LARGER PARTY, WOULD BE ACCUSED BY MUCH OF ITS MEMBERSHIP OF "SELLING OUT" IF IT PARTICIPATED IN A GOVDRNMENT HEADED BY POUL HARTLING. HARTLING, ON THE OTHER HAND HAS PROCLAIMED THAT IF HIS LIBERALS SHOW "SIGNIFICANT" ELECTION GAINS (A FOREGONE CONCLUSION) THOSE WHO VOTED FOR THEM WOULD BE "BETRAYED" IF THE LIBERALS BECAME PART OF A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

10. THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS IS THE
CONTINUATION OF HARTLING AS PRIME MINISTER. IT NOW APPEARS
DOUBTFUL, HOWEVER, THAT HE AND HIS LIBERALS WILL BE ABLE
TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE ON THE BASIS OF THE SAME KIND OF
"NEGATIVE MAJORITY" THEY EXPLOITED IN THE LAST PARLIAMENT.
IF NOT, HE WILL HAVE TO REACH A COMPROMISE TO ENSURE THE
SUPPORT OF WHAT REMAINS OF THE RADICALS AND THE OTHER PARTIES
OF THE LIBERAL-CENTER. AND AT SOME POINT, IN ORDER TO
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PREVENT SERIOUS LABOR PROBLEMS, HE MAY WELL ALSO HAVE TO
REACH AT LEAST A TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION WITH THE SOCIAL
DEMOCRATS.
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